

**Assist Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Act of 2018**

**Background**

For nearly three decades, the Outreach to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been the primary tool to help our nation's underserved producers gain access to USDA services.

The program is administered by the Office of Outreach and Advocacy and helps ensure that veteran, African American, Asian American, Hispanic, Native American, and immigrant socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have opportunities to successfully own, operate, and retain farms and ranches, and to equitably participate in USDA programs.

According to USDA, the program has supported assistance to over 100,000 farmers. USDA also reports the program has been extremely active and received a record number of applications. In fiscal year 2016, the program received 296 applicants for funding requests totaling over \$29 million, with only 49 projects receiving funding.

According to 2012 Census of Agriculture data, the Program led to Hispanic and Asian-American farm operators increasing by 21 percent; Native American farm operators increasing by 5 percent; and African American farm operators increasing by 7 percent.

**Bill Summary**

The bill reauthorizes the Outreach to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, which is set to expire at the end of this Farm Bill, through 2023. It also makes several programmatic improvements to strengthen the operation of the program. This includes providing authority for multi-year grants in order to increase efficiency for both USDA and the end users, improving the grant review process through a new peer review requirement, as well as annual public reports.

The bill also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to compile and publically report data annually for each county and state in the United States on the participation by race, gender, ethnicity and veteran status in all USDA programs serving farmers or ranchers. Periodic reports by USDA are also added on topics including the allocation of base acres and payment yields, grazing permits, guaranteed loans, and crop insurance premium waivers by race, gender and ethnicity.

**Bill Cosponsors**

Senate: Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Doug Jones (D-Ala.), Tom Udall (D-N.M.), and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.)

House: Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.), Representative Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.)

## **Over 100 Organizations Support the Bill:**

Rural Coalition

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund

North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project

ActionAid USA

Agroecology Research-Action Collective

American Agriculture Movement

American Indian Mothers Inc.

American Sustainable Business Council

Bioregional Strategies

Black Emergency Managers Association International

Fair Food Network

Family Farm Defenders

Farm Aid

FoodCorps

Food & Water Watch

Friends of the Earth

Global Justice Ecology Project

GreenLatinos

Indian Nations Conservation Alliance

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Justice Action Mobilization Network

National Family Farm Coalition

National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

National Young Farmers Coalition

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.  
Organic Consumers Association  
Pesticide Action Network  
Radiant Health  
Rural Advancement Fund of the National Sharecroppers Fund  
Sierra Club  
The Common Market  
The Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA  
Transformative Justice Coalition  
Union of Concerned Scientists

**Regional Organizations**

AFGE Local 3354  
Agroecology Research Action-Collective (ARC)  
Alabama State Association of Cooperatives  
Atrisco Land Grant  
Atrisco Land Rights Council  
Black Farmers and Ranchers New Mexico  
Black Mesa Farm  
Border Agricultural Workers Project  
California FarmLink  
California Institute for Rural Studies  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Casa Grande Farms  
Cottage House Inc.,  
CT NOFA: The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut  
Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, UC Berkeley  
Desert Forge Foundation  
Earth Ethics  
Fair Farms Maryland

Food & Sustainable Agriculture Systems program, College of the Atlantic

Food for Maine's Future

Future Harvest CASA

Greene County Newspaper Company

Individual researcher

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Just Food

Land Stewardship Project

LiveWell Colorado

Manito Ranches

Merced Del Pueblo De San Joaquin Del Rio de Chama

Michigan Food & Farming Systems

Michigan Young Farmer Coalition

Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Missouri Rural Crisis Center

Montezuma Farms

MOSES

NM Agricultural Policy Council

NOFA-VT

Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council

Northeast Organic Farming Association/ Massachusetts Chapter

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Now You Know New Mexico

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc.

Operation Spring Plant, Inc  
Orona Ranch  
Planting Justice  
PLBA Housing Development Corporation  
Prince George's County Food Equity Council  
Rural Advancement Foundation International  
Soil Generation  
Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville  
Sustainable communities Network  
Texas Mexico Border Coalition CBO  
The Agrarian Adventure  
The Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.  
Tierra del Sol  
University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program  
Wellsave  
Winds of Change Advocacy  
World Farmers